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NEW VIEWS

OF

CHRISTIANITY, SOCIETY,

AND

THE CHURCH.

BY O. A. BROWNSON.

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TO THE
MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

OF

THE SOCIETY FOR CHRISTIAN UNION AND PROGRESS,

THIS LITTLE

Volume is Inscribed,

AS A TOKEN OF AFFECTION AND ESTEEM,

BY THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E .

IT must not be inferred from my calling this little work *New Views*, that I profess to bring forward a new religion, or to have discovered a new Christianity. The religion of the Bible I believe to be given by the inspiration of God, and the Christianity of Christ satisfies my understanding and my heart. However widely I may dissent from the Christianity of the Church, with that of Christ I am content to stand or fall, and I ask no higher glory than to live and die in it and for it.

I believe my views are somewhat original, but I am far from considering them the only or even the most important views which may be taken of the subjects on which I treat. Those subjects have a variety of aspects, and all their aspects are true and valuable. He who presents any one of them does a service to

Humanity; and he who presents one of them has no occasion to fall out with him who presents another, nor to claim superiority over him.

Although I consider the views contained in the following pages original, I believe the conclusions, to which I come at last, will be found very much in accordance with those generally adopted by the denomination of Christians, with whom it has been for some years my happiness to be associated. That denomination, however, must not be held responsible for any of the opinions I have advanced. I am not the organ of a sect. I do not speak by authority, nor under tutelage. I speak for myself and from my own convictions. And in this way, better than I could in any other, do I prove my sympathy with the body of which I am a member, and establish my right to be called a Unitarian.

In what I have written here, as well as in all I have written elsewhere and on other occasions, I have aimed to set an example of

free thought and free speech. I ask no thanks for this, for it was my duty and I dared not do otherwise. Besides, Theology can never rise to the rank and certainty of a science, till it be submitted to the free and independent action of the human mind.

It will at once be seen that I have given only a few rough sketches of the subjects I have introduced. Many statements appear without the qualifications with which they exist in my own mind, many parts are doubtless obscure for the want of fuller developments, and the whole probably needs to be historically verified. But I have done all I could without making a larger book, and a larger book I could hope that nobody would buy or read. I may hereafter fill up my sketches and complete my pictures; but it would have been useless in the present state of the public mind to attempt more than I have done.

For my literary sins I have a right to some indulgence. My early life was spent in far other pursuits than those of literature. I make no pretensions to scholarship. For all

my other sins — except those of omission, for which I have given a valid excuse — I ask no indulgence. I hope I shall be rigidly criticised. He who helps me correct my errors is my friend.

Those who feel any interest in “The Society for Christian Union and Progress” — a society collected during the past summer, and of which I am the minister — may find in this volume the principles on which that society is founded, and the objects it contemplates. To the members of that society and to those who have listened to my preaching these views will not be new.

If any of my readers wish to pursue the subject touched upon in my Introduction, I would refer them to Benjamin Constant’s great work “*De la Religion considérée dans sa Source, ses Formes et ses Developpements* ;” to “*Religion and the Church*,” a book by Dr. Follen, which he is now publishing in a series of numbers ; and especially to Schleiermacher’s work “*Ueber die Religion : Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*,” or

“Discourses on Religion, addressed to the Cultivated among its Despisers,” a work which produced a powerful sensation in Germany when it first appeared, and one which cannot fail to exert a salutary influence on religious inquiry among ourselves. A friend, to whom I am proud to acknowledge myself under many obligations, has translated this work in the course of his own private studies, and I cannot but hope that he may be induced ere long to publish it.

With these remarks I commit my little work to its fate. It contains results to which I have come only by years of painful experience; but I dismiss it from my mind with the full conviction, that He, who has watched over my life and preserved me amidst scenes through which I hope I may not be called to pass again, will take care that if what it contains be false it shall do no harm, and if it be true that it shall not die.

O. A. B.

Boston, Nov. 8, 1836.

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INTRODUCTION.

RELIGION is natural to man and he ceases to be man the moment he ceases to be religious.

This position is sustained by what we are conscious of in ourselves and by the universal history of mankind.

Man has a capacity for religion, faculties which are useless without it, and wants which God alone can satisfy. Accordingly wherever he is, in whatever age or country, he has — with a few individual exceptions easily accounted for — some sort of religious notions and some form of religious worship.

But it is only religion, as distinguished from religious institutions, that is natural to man. The religious sentiment is universal, permanent, and indestructible; religious institutions depend on transient causes, and vary in different countries and epochs.

As distinguished from religious institutions, religion is the Conception, or Sentiment, of the Holy, that which makes us think of something as Reverend, and prompts us to revere it. It is that indefinable something within us which gives a meaning to the words Venerable and Awful, which makes us linger around the Sacred and the Time-hallowed, the graves of heroes or of nations, — which leads us to launch away upon the boundless expanse, or plunge into the mysterious depths of Being, and which, from the very ground of our nature, like the Seraphim of the prophet, is forever crying out, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

Religious institutions are the forms with which man clothes his religious sentiment, the answer he gives to the question, What is the Holy? Were he a stationary being, or could he take in the whole of truth at a single glance, the answer once given would be always satisfactory, the institution once adopted would be universal, unchangeable, and eternal. But neither is the fact. Man’s starting-point is the low valley, but he is continually — with slow and toilsome effort it may be — ascending the sides of the mountain to more favorable positions, from which his eye may sweep a broader horizon

of truth. He begins in ignorance, but he is ever growing in knowledge.

In our ignorance, when we have seen but little of truth, and seen that little but dimly, we identify the Holy with the merely Terrible, the Powerful, the Inscrutable, the Useful, or the Beautiful; and we adopt as its symbols, the Thunder and Lightning, Winds and Rain, Ocean and Storm, majestic River or placid Lake, shady Grove or winding Brook, the Animal, the Bow or Spear by means of which we are fed, clothed, and protected; but as Experience rolls back the darkness, which made all around us appear huge and spectral, purges and extends our vision, these become inadequate representatives of our religious ideas; they fail to shadow forth the Holy to our understandings; and we leave them and rise to that which appears to be free from their limited and evanescent nature, to that which is Unlimited, All-sufficient, and Unfailing.

We are creatures of growth; it is, therefore, impossible that all our institutions should not be mutable and transitory. We are forever discovering new fields of truth, and every new discovery requires a new institution, or the modification of an old one. We might as well demand that the

sciences of physiology, chemistry, and astronomy should wear eternally the same form, as that religious institutions should be unchangeable, and that those which satisfied our fathers should always satisfy us.

All things change their forms. Literature, Art, Science, Governments, change under the very eye of the spectator. Religious institutions are subject to the same universal law. Like the individuals of our race, they pass away and leave us to deck their tombs, or in our despair, to exclaim that we will lie down in the grave with them. But as the race itself does not die, as new generations crowd upon the departing to supply their places, so does the reproductive energy of religion survive all mutations of forms, and so do new institutions arise to gladden us with their youth and freshness, to carry us farther onward in our progress, and upward nearer to That which "is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

NEW VIEWS.

CHAPTER I.

CHRISTIANITY.

ABOUT two thousand years ago, Mankind, having exhausted all their old religious institutions, received from their heavenly Father through the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth a new institution which was equal to their advanced position, and capable of aiding and directing their future progress.

But this institution must be spoken of as one which was, not as one which is. Notwithstanding the vast territories it acquired, the mighty influence it once exerted over the destinies of humanity, and its promises of immortality, it is now but the mere shadow of a sovereign, and its empire is falling in ruins. What remains of it is

only the body after the spirit has left it. It is no longer animated by a living soul. The sentiment of the Holy has deserted it, and it is a by-word and a mockery.

Either then Jesus did not embrace in his mind the whole of truth, or else the Church has at best only partially realized his conception.

No institution, so long as it is in harmony with the progress of the understanding, can fail to command obedience or kindle enthusiasm. The Church now does neither. There is a wide disparity between it and the present state of intellectual development. We have discovered truths which it cannot claim as its own; we are conscious of instincts which it disavows, and which we cannot, or will not, suppress. Whose is the fault? Is it the fault of Humanity, of Jesus, or of the Church?

Humanity cannot be blamed, for Humanity's law is to grow; it has an inherent right to seek for truth, and it is under no obligation to shut its eyes to the facts which unfold themselves to its observation. It is not the fault of Jesus, unless it can be proved that all he contemplated has been realized, that mankind have risen to as pure, and as happy a state as he proposed; have indeed fully

comprehended him, taken in his entire thought, and reduced it to practice. Nobody will pretend this. The fault then must be borne by the Church.

The Church even in its best days was far below the conception of Jesus. It never comprehended him, and was always a very inadequate symbol of the Holy as he understood it.

Christianity, as it existed in the mind of Jesus, was the type of the most perfect religious institution to which the human race will, probably, ever attain. It was the point where the sentiment and the institution, the idea and the symbol, the conception and its realization appear to meet and become one. But the contemporaries of Jesus were not equal to this profound thought. They could not comprehend the God-Man, the deep meaning of his assertion, "I and my Father are one." He spake as never man spake — uttered truths for all nations, and for all times; but what he uttered was necessarily measured by the capacity of those who heard him — not by his own. The less never comprehends the greater. Their minds must have been equal to his in order to have been able to take in the full import of his words. They might — as they did — apprehend a great and glorious meaning in what he said; they might kindle at the

truths he revealed to their understandings, and even glory in dying at the stake to defend them; but they would invariably and inevitably narrow them down to their own inferior intellects, and interpret them by their own previous modes of thinking and believing.

The Disciples themselves, the familiar friends, the chosen Apostles of Jesus, notwithstanding all the advantages of personal intercourse and personal explanations, never fully apprehended him. They mistook him for the Jewish Messiah, and even after his resurrection and ascension, they supposed it to have been his mission to "restore the kingdom to Israel." Though commanded to preach the Gospel to "every creature," they never once imagined that they were to preach it to any people but the Jewish, till the circumstances, which preceded and followed Peter's visit to Cornelius the Roman Centurion, took place to correct their error. It was not till then that any one of them could say, "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." If this was true of the Disciples, how much more true must it have been of those who received the words of Jesus at second

or third hand, and without any of the personal explanations or commentaries necessary to unfold their meaning?

Could the age, in which Jesus appeared, have comprehended him, it would have been superior to him, and consequently have had no need of him. We do not seek an instructor for our children in one who is not able to teach them. Moreover, if that age could have even rightly *apprehended* Jesus, we should be obliged to say his mission was intended to be confined to that age, or else to admit that the human race was never to go beyond the point then attained. Either Jesus did not regard the Future of Humanity, or he designed to interrupt its progress, and strike it with the curse of immobility; or else he was above his age and of course not to be understood by it. The world has not stood still since his coming; the Church has always considered his kingdom as one of which there is to be no end; and we know that he was not comprehended, and that even we, with the advantage of nearly two thousand years of mental and moral progress, are far — very far — below him.

If the age in which Jesus appeared could not comprehend him, it is obvious that it could not fully embody him in its institutions. It could

embody no more of him than it could receive, and as it could receive only a part of him, we must admit that the Church has never been more than partially Christian. Never has it been the real body of Christ. Never has it reflected the God-Man perfectly. Never has it been a true mirror of the Holy. Always has the Holy in the sense of the Church been a very inferior thing to what it was in the mind and heart and life of Jesus.

But we must use measured terms in our condemnation of the Church. We must not ask the man in the child. The Church did what it could. It did its best to "form Christ" within itself, "the hope of glory," and was up to the period of its downfall as truly Christian, as the progress made by the human race admitted. It aided the growth of the human mind; enabled us to take in more truth than it had itself received; furnished us the light by which we discovered its defects; and by no means should its memory be cursed. Nobly and perseveringly did it discharge its duty; useful was it in its day and generation; and now that it has given up the ghost, we should pay it the rites of honorable burial, plant flowers over its resting place, and sometimes repair thither to bedew them with our tears.

To comprehend Jesus, to seize the Holy as it was in him, and consequently the true idea of Christianity, we must, from the heights to which we have risen by aid of the Church, look back and down upon the age in which he came, ascertain what was the work which there was for him to perform, and from that obtain a key to what he proposed to accomplish.

Two systems then disputed the Empire of the World ; Spiritualism * represented by the Eastern world, the old world of Asia, and Materialism represented by Greece and Rome. Spiritualism regards purity or holiness as predicable of Spirit alone, and Matter as essentially impure, possessing and capable of receiving nothing of the Holy, — the prison house of the soul, its only hindrance to a union with God, or absorption into his essence, the cause of all uncleanness, sin, and evil, consequently to be contemned, degraded, and as far as possible annihilated. Materialism takes the other extreme, does not recognise the claims of Spirit, disregards

* I use these terms, Spiritualism and Materialism, to designate two social, rather than two philosophical systems. They designate two orders, which, from time out of mind, have been called *spiritual* and *temporal* or carnal, *holy* and *profane*, *heavenly* and *worldly*, &c.

the soul, counts the body everything, earth all, heaven nothing, and condenses itself into the advice, "Eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

This opposition between Spiritualism and Materialism presupposes a necessary and original antithesis between Spirit and Matter. When Spirit and Matter are given as antagonist principles, we are obliged to admit antagonism between all the terms into which they are respectively convertible. From Spirit is deduced by natural generation, God, the Priesthood, Faith, Heaven, Eternity; from Matter, Man, the State, Reason, the Earth, and Time; consequently to place Spirit and Matter in opposition, is to make an antithesis between God and Man, the Priesthood and the State, Faith and Reason, Heaven and Earth, and Time and Eternity.

This antithesis generates perpetual and universal war. It is necessary then to remove it and harmonize, or unite the two terms. Now, if we conceive Jesus as standing between Spirit and Matter, the representative of both—God-Man—the point where both meet and lose their antithesis, laying a hand on each and saying, "Be one, as I and my Father are one," thus sanctifying both and marrying them in a mystic and holy

union, we shall have his secret thought and the true Idea of Christianity.

The Scriptures uniformly present Jesus to us as a mediator, the middle term between two extremes, and they call his work a mediation, a reconciliation—an atonement. The Church has ever considered Jesus as making an atonement. It has held on to the term at all times as with the grasp of death. The first charge it has labored to fix upon heretics has been that of rejecting the Atonement, and the one all dissenters from the predominant doctrines of the day, have been most solicitous to repel is that of “denying the Lord who bought us.” The whole Christian world, from the days of the Apostles up to the moment in which I write, have identified Christianity with the Atonement, and felt that in admitting the Atonement they admitted Christ, and that in denying it they were rejecting him.

Jesus himself always spoke of his doctrine, the grand Idea which lay at the bottom of all his teaching, under the term “Love.” “A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another.” “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” John, who seems to have caught more of the peculiar

spirit of Jesus than any of the Disciples, sees nothing but love in the Gospel. Love penetrated his soul; it runs through all his writings, and tradition relates that it at length so completely absorbed him that all he could say in his public addresses was, "Little children, love one another." He uniformly dwells with unutterable delight on the love which the Father has for us and that which we may have for him, the intimate union of man with God, expressed by the strong language of dwelling in God and God dwelling in us. In his view there is no antagonism. All antithesis is destroyed. Love sheds its hallowed and hallowing light over both God and Man, over Spirit and Matter, binding all beings and all Being in one strict and everlasting union.

The nature of love is to destroy all antagonism. It brings together; it begetteth union, and from union cometh peace. And what word so accurately expresses to the consciousness of Christendom, the intended result of the mission of Jesus, as that word peace? Every man who has read the New Testament feels that it was peace that Jesus came to effect, — peace after which the soul has so often sighed and yearned in vain, and a peace not merely between two or three individuals

for a day, but a universal and eternal peace between all conflicting elements, between God and man, between the soul and body, between this world and another, between the duties of time and the duties of eternity. How clearly is this expressed in that sublime chorus of the angels, sung over the manger-cradle — “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good-will to men!”

Where there is but one term there is no union. There is no harmony with but one note. It is mockery to talk to us of peace where one of the two belligerent parties is annihilated. That were the peace of the grave. Jesus must then save both parties. The Church has, therefore, with a truth it has never comprehended, called him GOD-MAN. But if the two terms and their products be originally and essentially antagonist; if there be between them an innate hostility, their union, their reconciliation cannot be effected. Therefore in proposing the union, in attempting the Atonement, Christianity declares as its great doctrine that there is no essential, no original antithesis between God and man; that neither Spirit nor Matter is unholy in its nature; that all things, Spirit, Matter, God, Man, Soul, Body, Heaven, Earth, Time, Eternity, with all their duties and interests, are in themselves

holy. All things proceed from the same Holy Fountain, and no fountain sendeth forth both sweet waters and bitter. It therefore writes "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" upon every thing, and sums up its sublime teaching in that grand synthesis, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and soul and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself."

CHAPTER II.

THE CHURCH.

THE aim of the Church was to embody the Holy as it existed in the mind of Jesus, and had it succeeded, it would have realized the Atonement; that is, the reconciliation of Spirit and Matter and all their products.

But the time was not yet. The Paraclete was in expectation. The Church could only give currency to the fact that it was the mission of Jesus to make an atonement. It from the first misapprehended the conditions on which it was to be effected. Instead of understanding Jesus to assert the holiness of both Spirit and Matter, it understood him to admit that Matter was rightfully cursed, and to predicate holiness of Spirit alone. In the sense of the Church then he did not come to atone Spirit and Matter, but to redeem Spirit from the consequences of its connexion with Matter. His name therefore was not the Atoner, the Reconciler, but the Redeemer, and his work not properly an

atonement, but a redemption. This was the original sin of the Church.

By this misapprehension the Church rejected the mediator. The Christ ceases to be the middle term uniting Spirit and Matter, the *hilasterion*, the mercy-seat, or point where God and man meet and lose their antithesis, the Advocate with the Father for Humanity, and becomes the Avenger of Spirit, the Manifestation of God's righteous indignation against Man. He dies to save mankind, it is true, but he dies to pay a penalty. God demands man's everlasting destruction; Jesus admits that God's demand is just, and dies to discharge it. Hence the symbol of the cross, signifying to the Church an original and necessary antithesis between God and man which can be removed only by the sacrifice of justice to mercy. In this the Church took its stand with Spiritualism, and from a mediator became a partisan.

By taking its stand with Spiritualism the Church condemned itself to all the evils of being exclusive. It obliged itself to reject an important element of truth, and it became subject to all the miseries and vexations of being intolerant. It became responsible for all the consequences which necessarily result from Spiritualism. The first of these conse-

quences was the denial that Jesus came in the flesh. If Matter be essentially unholy, then Jesus, if he had a material body, must have been unholy; if unholy, sinful. Hence all the difficulties of the Gnostics—difficulties hardly adjusted by means of a Virgin Mother and the Immaculate Conception; for this mode of accommodation really denied the God-Man, the symbol of the great truth the Church was to embody. It left the God indeed, but it destroyed the Man, inasmuch as it separated the humanity of Jesus by its very origin from common humanity.

Man's inherent depravity, his corruption by nature followed as a matter of course. Man by his very nature partakes of Matter, is material, then unholy, then sinful, corrupt, depraved. He is originally material, therefore originally a sinner. Hence original sin. Sometimes original sin is indeed traced to a primitive disobedience, to the Fall; but then the doctrine of the Fall itself is only one of the innumerable forms which is assumed by the doctrine of the essential impurity of Matter.

From this original, inherent depravity of human nature necessarily results that antithesis between God and man which renders their union impossible

and which imperiously demands the sacrifice of one or the other. "Die he or justice must." Man is sacrificed on the cross in the person of Jesus. Hence the Vicarious Atonement, the conversion of the Atonement into an Expiation. But, if man was sacrificed, if he died as he deserved in Jesus, his death was eternal. Symbolically then he cannot rise. The body of Jesus after his resurrection is not material in the opinion of the Church. He does not rise God-Man, but God. Hence the absolute Deity of Christ, which under various disguises has always been the sense of the Church.

From man's original and inherent depravity it results that he has no power to work out his own salvation. Hence the doctrine of Human Inability. By nature man is enslaved to Matter; he is born in sin and shapen in iniquity. He is sold to sin, to the world, to the devil. He must be ransomed. Matter cannot ransom him; then Spirit must, — and "God the mighty Maker" dies to redeem his creature — to deliver the soul from the influence of Matter.

But this can be only partially effected in this world. As long as we live, we must drag about with us this clog of earth — matter — and not till after death, when our vile bodies shall be changed

into the likeness of Christ's glorious body, shall we be really saved. We are not then saved here; we only hope to be saved hereafter. Hence the doctrine which denies holiness to man in this world, which places the kingdom of God exclusively in the world to come, and which establishes a real antithesis between heaven and earth, and the means necessary to secure present well-being and those necessary to secure future blessedness.

God has indeed died to ransom sinners from the grave of the body, to redeem them from the flesh, to break the chains of the bound and to set the captive free; but the effects of the ransom must be secured; agents must be appointed to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, to bid the prisoner hope, and the captive rejoice that the hour of release will come. Hence the Church. Hence too the authority of the Church to preach salvation—to save sinners. And as the Church is composed of all who have this authority and of none others, therefore the dogma, “Out of the Church there is no salvation.”

The Church is commissioned; it is God's agent in saving sinners. It is then his representative. If the representative of God, then of spirit. In its representative character, that is, as a Church, it is

then spiritual, and if spiritual, holy; and if holy, infallible. Hence the Infallibility of the Church.

The Holy should undoubtedly govern the Unholy; Spirit then should govern Matter. Spirit then is supreme; and the Church as the representative of Spirit must also be supreme. Hence the Supremacy of the Church.

The Church is a vast body composed of many members. It needs a head. It should also be modelled after the Church above. The Church above has a supreme head, Jesus Christ; the Church below should then have a head, who may be its centre, its unity, the personification of its wisdom and its authority. Hence the Pope, the Supreme Head of the Church, Vicar of Jesus, and Representative of God.

The Church is a spiritual body. Its supremacy then is a spiritual supremacy. A spiritual supremacy extends to thought and conscience. Hence on the one hand the Confessional designed to solve cases of conscience, and on the other Creeds, Ex-purgatory Indexes, Inquisitions, Pains and Penalties against Heretics.

The spiritual order in heaven is absolute; the Church then as the representative of that order must also be absolute. As a representative it

speaks not in its own name, but in the name of the power it represents. Since that power may command, the Church may command; and as it may command in the name of an absolute sovereign, its commands must be implicitly obeyed. An absolute sovereign may command to any extent he pleases — what shall be believed as well as what shall be done. Hence Implicit Faith, the Authority which the Church has alleged for the basis of Belief. Hence too prohibitions against reason and reasoning which have marked the Church under all its forms, in all its phases and divisions and subdivisions.

Reason too is human; then it is material; to set it up against Faith were to set up the Material against the Spiritual; the Human against the Divine; Man against God: for the Church being God by proxy, by representation, it has of course the right to consider whatever is set up against the faith it enjoins as set up against God.

The Civil Order, if it be any thing more than a function of the Church, belongs to the category of Matter. It is then inferior to the Church. It is then bound to obey the Church. Hence the claims of the Church over civil institutions, its right to bestow the crowns of kings, to place kingdoms under ban, to absolve subjects from their allegiance,

and all the wars and antagonism between Church and State.

The spiritual order alone is holy. Its interests are then the only interests it is not sinful to labor to promote. In laboring to promote them, the Church was under the necessity of laboring for itself. Hence its justification to itself of its selfishness, its rapacity, its untiring efforts to aggrandize itself at the expense of individuals and of states.

As the interests of the Church alone were holy, it was of course sinful to be devoted to any others. All the interests of the material order, that is, all temporal interests, were sinful, and the Church never ceased to call them so. Hence its perpetual denunciation of wealth, place and renown, and the obstacles it always placed in the way of all direct efforts for the promotion of well-being on earth. This is the reason why it has discouraged, indeed unchurched, anathematized, all efforts to gain civil and political liberty, and always regarded with an evil eye all industry not directly or indirectly in its own interests.

This same exclusive Spiritualism borrowed from Asia, striking Matter with the curse of being unclean in its nature, was the reason for enjoining Celibacy upon the Clergy. An idea of sanctity was

attached to the ministerial office, which it was supposed any contact with the flesh would sully. It also led devotees, those who desired to lead lives strictly holy, to renounce the flesh, as well as the world and the devil, to take vows of perpetual celibacy and to shut themselves up in Monasteries and Nunneries. It is the origin of all those self-inflicted tortures, mortifications of the body, penances, fastings, and that neglect of this world for another, which fill so large a space in the history of the Church during what are commonly called the "dark ages." The Church in its theory looked always with horror upon all sensual indulgences. Marriage was sinful, till purified by Holy Church. The song and the dance, innocent amusements, and wholesome recreations, though sometimes conceded to the incessant importunities of Matter, were of the devil. Even the gay dress and blithesome song of nature were offensive. A dark, silent, friar's frock was the only befitting garb for nature or for man. The *beau ideal* of a good Christian was one who renounced all his connexions with the world, became deaf to the voice of kindred and of friends, insensible to the sweetest and holiest emotions of humanity, immured himself in

a cave or cell, and did nothing the livelong day but count his beads and kiss the crucifix.

Exceptions there were; but this was the Idea, the dominant tendency of the Church. Thanks, however, to the stubbornness of Matter, and to the superintending care of Providence, its dominant tendency always found powerful resistance, and its Idea was never able fully to realize itself.

CHAPTER III.

PROTESTANTISM.

EVERY thing must have its time. The Church abused, degraded, vilified Matter, but could not annihilate it. It existed in spite of the Church. It increased in power, and at length rose against Spiritualism and demanded the restoration of its rights. This rebellion of Materialism, of the material order against the Spiritual, is Protestantism.

Matter always exerted a great influence over the practice of the Church. In the first three centuries it was very powerful. It condemned the Gnostics and Manichæans as heretics, and was on the point of rising to empire under the form of Arianism. But the Oriental influence predominated, and the Arians became acknowledged heretics.

After the defeat of Arianism, that noble protest in its day of Rationalism against Mysticism, of Matter against Spirit, of European against Asiatic ideas, the Church departed more and more from

the Atonement, and became more and more arrogant, arbitrary, spiritualistic, papistical. Still Matter occasionally made itself heard. It could not prevent the celibacy of the clergy, but it did maintain the unity of the race and prevented the reëstablishment of a sacerdotal caste, claiming by birth a superior sanctity. It broke out too in the form of Pelagianism, that doctrine which denies that man is clean gone in iniquity, and which makes the material order count for something. Pelagius was the able defender of Humanity when it seemed to be deserted by all its friends, and his efforts were by no means unavailing.

Matter asserted its rights and avenged itself in a less unexceptionable form in the Convents, the Monasteries and Nunneries, among the clergy of all ranks, in that gross licentiousness which led to the reformation attempted by Hildebrand; and finally it ascended — not avowedly, but in reality — the papal throne, in the person of Leo X.

The accession of Leo X. to the papal throne is a remarkable event in the history of the Church. It marks the predominance of material interests in the very bosom of the Church itself. It is a proof that whatever might be the theory of the Church, however different it claimed to be from all other

powers, it was at this epoch in practice the same as the kingdoms of men. Poverty ceased in its eyes to be a virtue. The poor mendicant, the bare-footed friar, could no longer hope to become one day the spiritual head of Christendom. Spiritual gifts and graces were not now enough. High birth and royal pretensions were required; and it was not as a priest, but as a member of the princely House of Medici that Leo became Pope.

The object of the Church had changed. It had ceased to regard the spiritual wants and welfare of mankind. It had become wealthy. It had acquired vast portions of this world's goods, and its great care was to preserve them. Its interests had become temporal interests, and therefore it needed, not a spiritual Father, but a temporal prince. It is as a prince that Leo conducts himself. His legates to the Imperial, English and French Courts, entered into negotiations altogether as ambassadors of a temporal prince, not as the simple representatives of the Church.

Leo himself is a sensualist, sunk in his sensual pleasures, and perhaps a great sufferer in consequence of his excesses. It is said he was an Atheist, a thing more than probable. All his tastes were worldly. Instead of the sacred books of the Church,

the pious legends of Saints and Martyrs, he amused himself with the elegant but *profane* literature of Greece and Rome. His principal secretaries were not holy monks but eminent classical scholars. He revived and enlarged the University at Rome, encouraged human learning and the arts of civilization, completed St. Peter's, and his reign was graced by Michael Angelo and Raphael. He engaged in wars and diplomacy and in them both had respect only to the goods of the Church, or to the interests of himself and family as temporal princes.

Now all this was in direct opposition to the theory of the Church. Materialism was in the papal chair, but it was there as a usurper, as an illegitimate. It reigned in fact, but not in right. The Church was divided against itself. In theory it was Spiritualist, but in practice it was Materialist. It could not long survive this inconsistency, and it needed not the attacks of Luther to hasten the day of its complete destruction.

But Materialism must have become quite powerful to have been able to usurp the papal throne itself. It was indeed too powerful to bear patiently the name of usurper; at least to be contented to reign only indirectly. It would be acknowledged as sovereign, and proclaimed legitimate. This the

Church could not do. The Church could do nothing but cling to its old pretensions. To expel Materialism and return to Hildebrand was out of the question. To give up its claims, and own itself Materialist, would have been to abandon all title to even its material possessions, since it was by virtue of its spiritual character that it held them. Materialism — as it could reign in the Church only as it were by stealth — resolved to leave the Church and to reign in spite of it, against it, and even on its ruins. It protested, since it had all the power, against being called hard names, and armed itself in the person of Luther to vindicate its rights and to make its claims acknowledged.

The dominant character of Protestantism is then the insurrection of Materialism, and what we call the Reformation is really a Revolution in favor of the material order. Spiritualism had exhausted its energies; it had done all it could for Humanity; the time had come for the material element of our nature, which Spiritualism had neglected and grossly abused, to rise from its depressed condition and contribute its share to the general progress of mankind. It rose, and in rising it brought up the whole series of terms the Church had disregarded. It brought up the state, civil liberty, human reason, philosophy, industry, all temporal interests.

In Protestantism, Greece and Rome revived and again carried their victorious arms into the East. The Reformation connects us with classical antiquity, with the beautiful and graceful forms of Grecian art and literature, and with Roman eloquence and jurisprudence, as the Church had connected us with Judea, Egypt and India.

CHAPTER IV.

PROTESTANTISM.

THAT Protestantism is the insurrection of Matter against Spirit, of the material against the spiritual order, is susceptible of very satisfactory historical verification.

One of the most immediate and efficient causes of Protestantism was the Revival of Greek and Roman Literature. Constantinople was taken by the Turks, and its scholars and the remains of Classical Learning which it had preserved were dispersed over Western Europe. The Classics took possession of the Universities and the Learned, were studied, commented on, appealed to as an authority paramount to that of the Church and — Protestantism was born.

By means of the Classics, the scholars of the Fifteenth Century were introduced to a world altogether unlike and much superior to that in which they lived — to an order of ideas wholly diverse from those avowed or tolerated by the Church.

They were enchanted. They had found the Ideal of their dreams. They became disgusted with the present; they repelled the civilization effected by the Church, looked with contempt on its Fathers, Saints, Martyrs, Schoolmen, Troubadours, Knights and Minstrels, and sighed and yearned and labored to reproduce Athens or Rome.

And what was that Athens and that Rome which seemed to them to realize the very Ideal of the Perfect? We know very well to-day what they were. They were material; through the whole period of their historical existence, it is well known that the material or temporal order predominated over the spiritual. They are not that old spiritual world of the East which reigned in the Church. In that old world — in India for instance — where Spiritualism has its throne, Man sinks before God, Matter fades away before the presence of Spirit, and Time is swallowed up in Eternity. Industry is in its incipient stages, and the state scarcely appears. There is no history, no chronology. All is dateless and unregistered. An inflexible and changeless tyranny weighs down the human race and paralyzes its energies. Ages on ages roll away and bring no melioration. Every thing remains as it was, monotonous and immovable as the Spirit it contemplates and adores.

In Athens and Rome all this is reversed. Human interests, the interests of mankind in time and space, predominate. Man is the most conspicuous figure in the group. He is every where, and his imprint is upon every thing. Industry flourishes; commerce is encouraged; the state is constituted, and tends to democracy; citizens assemble to discuss their common interests; the orator harangues them; the aspirant courts them; the warrior and the statesman render them an account of their doings and await their award. The PEOPLE—not the Gods—will, decree, make, unmake or modify the laws. Divinity does not become incarnate, as in the Asiatic world, but men are deified. History is not Theogony, but a record of human events and transactions. Poetry sings heroes, the great and renowned of earth, or chants at the festal board and the couch of voluptuousness. Art models its creations after human forms, for human pleasure or human convenience. They are human faces we see; human voices we hear; human dwellings in which we lodge and dream of human growth and human melioration.

There are Gods and temples, and priests and oracles, and augurs and auguries, it is true; but they are not like those we meet where Spiritualism

reigns. The Gods are all anthropomorphous. Their forms are the perfection of the human. The allegorical beasts, the strange beasts, compounded of parts of many known and unknown beasts which meet us in Indian, Egyptian and Persian Mythology, as symbols of the Gods, are extinct. Priests are not a caste as they are under Spiritualism, springing from the head of Brama and claiming superior sanctity and power as their birth-right, but simple police officers. Religion is merely a function of the state. Socrates dies because he breaks the laws of Athens — not, as Jesus did — for blaspheming the Gods. Numa introduces or organizes Polytheism at Rome for the purpose of governing the people by means of appeals to their sentiment of the Holy; and the Roman “Pontifex Maximus” was never any thing more than a master of police.

This in its generality is equally a description of Protestantism, as might indeed have been asserted beforehand. The epoch of the Revival of Classical Literature must have been predisposed to Materialism or else it could not have been pleased with the Classics, and the influence of the Classics must have been to increase that predisposition, and as Protestantism was a result of both, it could be nothing but Materialism.

In classical antiquity religion is a function of the state. It is the same under Protestantism. Henry the Eighth of England declares himself supreme Head of the Church, not by virtue of his spiritual character, but by virtue of his character as a temporal prince. The Protestant princes of Germany are protectors of the Church; and all over Europe, there is an implied contract between the State and the Ecclesiastical Authorities. The State pledges itself to support the Church on condition that the Church support the State. Ask the kings, nobility, or even church dignitaries, why they support religion, and they will answer with one voice, "Because the people cannot be preserved in order, cannot be made to submit to their rulers, and because civil society cannot exist, without it." The same or a similar answer will be returned by almost every political man in this country; and truly may it be said that religion is valued by the protestant world as a subsidiary to the state, as a mere matter of police.

Under the reign of Spiritualism all questions are decided by authority. The Church prohibited reasoning. It commanded, and men were to obey or be counted rebels against God. Materialism, by raising up man and the state, makes the reason

of man, or the reason of the state, paramount to the commands of the Church. Under Protestantism, the state in most cases, the individual reason in a few, imposes the creed upon the Church. The King and Parliament in England determine the faith which the clergy must profess and maintain; the Protestant princes in Germany have the supreme control of the symbols of the Church, the right to enact what creed they please.

Indeed the authority of the Church in matters of belief was regarded by the Reformers as one of the greatest evils, against which they had to contend. It was particularly against this authority that Luther protested. What he and his coadjutors demanded, was the right to read and interpret the Bible for themselves. This was the right they wrested from the Church. To have been consequent they should have retained it in their hands as individuals; it would then have been the right of private judgment and, if it meant any thing, the right of the reason to sit in judgment on all propositions to be believed. To this extent, however, they were not prepared to go. Between the absolute authority of the Church, and the absolute authority of the individual reason, intervened the authority of the state. But as the state was ma-

terial, the substitution of its authority for the authority of the Church was still to substitute the Material for the Spiritual.

But the tendency, however arrested by the state, has been steadily towards the most unlimited freedom of thought and conscience. Our fathers rebelled against the authority of the state in religious matters as well as against the authority of the Pope. In political and industrial speculations, the English and Americans give the fullest freedom to the individual reason; Germany has done it to the greatest extent in historical, literary and philosophical, and to a very great extent, in theological matters, and France does it in every thing. All modern philosophy is built on the absolute freedom and independence of the individual reason; that is, the reason of humanity, in opposition to the reason of the church or the state. Des Cartes refused to believe in his own existence but upon the authority of his reason; Bacon allows no authority but observation and induction; Berkeley finds no ground for admitting an external world, and therefore denies it; and Hume finding no certain evidence of any thing outward or inward, doubted — philosophically — of all things.

Philosophy is a human creation ; it is the product of man, as the universe is of God. Under Spiritualism, then, which — in theory — demolishes man, there can be no philosophy ; yet as man, though denied, exists, there is a philosophical tendency. But this philosophical tendency is always either to Skepticism, Mysticism, or Idealism. Skepticism, that philosophy which denies all certainty, made its first appearance in modern times in the Church. The Church declared the reason unworthy of confidence, and in doing that gave birth to the whole skeptical philosophy. When the authority of the Church was questioned and she was compelled to defend it, she did it on the ground that the reason could not be trusted as a criterion of truth, and that there could be no certainty for man, if he did not admit an authority independent of his reason, — not perceiving that if the reason were struck with impotence there would be no means of substantiating the legitimacy of the authority.

On the other hand, the Church having its point of view in Spirit, consulted the soul before the body, became introspective, fixed on the Inward to the exclusion of the Outward. It overlooked the Outward ; and when that is overlooked it is hardly

possible that it should not be denied. Hence Idealism or Mysticism.

Under the reign of Materialism all this is changed. There is full confidence in the reason. The method of philosophizing is the experimental. But as the point of view is the Outward — Matter — Spirit is overlooked; Matter alone admitted. Hence philosophical Materialism. And philosophical Materialism, in germ or developed, has been commensurate with Protestantism. When the mind becomes fixed on the external world, inasmuch as we become acquainted with that world only by means of our senses, we naturally conclude that our senses are our only source of knowledge. Hence SENSUALISM, the philosophy supported by Locke, Condillac, and even by Bacon, so far as it concerns his own application of his method. And from the hypothesis that our senses are our only inlets of knowledge, we are compelled to admit that nothing can be known which is not cognizable by some one or all of them. Our senses take cognizance only of Matter; then we can know nothing but Matter. We can know nothing of the spirit or soul. The body is all that we know of man. That dies, and there ends man — at least all we know of him.

Hence no immortality, no future state. If nothing can be known but by means of our senses, God, then, inasmuch as we do not see him, hear him, taste him, smell him, touch him, cannot be known; then he does not exist for us. Hence Atheism. Hence Modern Infidelity, in all its forms, so prevalent in the last century, and so far from being extinct even in this.

The same tendency to exalt the terms depressed by the Church is to be observed in the religious aspect of Protestantism. Properly speaking, Protestantism has no religious character. As Protestants, people are not religious, but co-existing with their Protestantism, they may indeed retain something of religion. Men often act from mixed motives. They bear in their bosoms sometimes two antagonist principles, now obeying the one, and now the other, without being aware that both are not one and the same principle. With Protestants, religion has existed; but as a reminiscence, a tradition. Sometimes, indeed, the remembrance has been very lively, and seemed very much like reality. The old soldier warms up with the recollections of his early feats, and lives over his life as he relates its events to his grandchild, —

“Shoulders his crutch and shows how fields are won.”

If the religion of the Protestant world be a reminiscence, it must be the religion of the Church. It is, in fact, only Catholicism continued. The same principle lies at the bottom of all Protestant churches, in so far as they are churches, which was at the bottom of the Church of the middle ages. But Materialism modifies their rites and dogmas. In the practice of all, there is an effort to make them appear reasonable. Hence Commentaries, Expositions, and Defences without number. Even where the authority of the reason is denied, there is an instinctive sense of its authority and a desire to enlist it. In mere forms, pomp and splendor have gradually disappeared, and dry utility and even baldness have been consulted. In doctrines, those which exalt man and give him some share in the work of salvation have gained in credit and influence. Pelagianism, under some thin disguises or undisguised, has become almost universal. The doctrine of man's inherent Total Depravity, in the few cases in which it is asserted, is asserted, more as a matter of duty than of conviction. Nobody, who can help it, preaches the old-fashioned doctrine of God's Sovereignty, expressed in the dogma of unconditional Election and Reprobation. The Vicarious Atonement has hardly a friend

left. The Deity of Jesus is questioned, his simple Humanity is asserted and is gaining credence. Orthodox is a term which implies as much reproach as commendation; people are beginning to laugh at the claims of councils and synods, and to be quite merry at the idea of excommunication.

In Literature and Art there is the same tendency. Poetry in the last century hardly existed, and was, so far as it did exist, mainly ethical or descriptive. It had no revelations of the Infinite. Prose writers under Protestantism have been historians, critics, essayists, or controversialists; they have aimed almost exclusively at the elevation or adornment of the material order, and in scarcely an instance has a widely popular writer exalted God at the expense of Man, the Church at the expense of the State, Faith at the expense of Reason, or Eternity at the expense of Time. Art is finite, and gives us busts and portraits, or copies of Greek and Roman models. The Physical sciences take precedence of the Metaphysical, and faith in Rail-roads and Steam-boats is much stronger than in Ideas.

In governments, the tendency is the same. Nothing is more characteristic of Protestantism, than its influence in promoting civil and political liberty. Under its reign all forms of governments verge

towards the Democratic. "The King and the Church" are exchanged for the "Constitution and the People." Liberty, not Order, is the word that wakes the dead, and electrifies the masses. A social science is created, and the physical well-being of the humblest laborer is cared for, and made a subject of deliberation in the councils of nations.

Industry has received in Protestant countries its grandest developments. Since the time of Luther, it has been performing one continued series of miracles. Every corner of the globe is explored; the most distant and perilous seas are navigated; the most miserly soil is laid under contribution; manufactures, villages and cities spring up and increase as by enchantment; canals and rail-roads are crossing the country in every direction; the means of production, the comforts, conveniences and luxuries of life are multiplied to an extent hardly safe to relate.

Such, in its most general aspect, in its dominant tendency, is Protestantism. It is a new and much improved edition of the Classics. Its civilization belongs to the same order as that of Greece and Rome. It is in advance, greatly in advance, of Greece and Rome, but it is the same in its ground-

work. The Material predominates over the Spiritual. Men labor six days for this world and at most but one for the world to come. The great strife is for temporal goods, fame or pleasure. God, the Soul, Heaven, and Eternity, are thrown into the back ground, and almost entirely disappear in the distance. Right yields to Expediency, and Duty is measured by Utility. The real character of protestantism, the result to which it must come, wherever it can have its full development, may be best seen in France, at the close of the last century. The Church was converted into the Pantheon, and made a resting place for the bodies of the great and renowned of earth; God was converted into a symbol of the human reason, and man into the Man-Machine; Spiritualism fell, and the Revolution marked the complete triumph of Materialism.

CHAPTER V.

REACTION OF SPIRITUALISM.

WHAT I have said of the Protestant world cannot be applied to the present century without some important qualifications. Properly speaking, Protestantism finished its work and expired in the French Revolution at the close of the last century. Since then there has been a reaction in favor of Spiritualism.

Men incline to exclusive Spiritualism in proportion to their want of faith in the practicability of improving their earthly condition. This accounts for the predominance of Spiritualism in the Church. The Church grew up and constituted itself amidst the crash of a falling world, when all it knew or could conceive of material well-being was crumbling in ruins around it. Greece and Rome were the prey of merciless barbarians. Society was apparently annihilated. Order there was none. — Security for person, property, or life, seemed almost the extravagant vagary of some mad enthu-

siast. Lawless violence, brutal passion, besotting ignorance, tyrants and their victims, were the only spectacles presented to win men's regard for the earth, or to inspire them with faith and hope to labor for its improvement. To the generation of that day, when the North disgorged itself upon the South, the earth must have appeared forsaken by its Maker, and abandoned to the Devil and his ministers. It was a wretched land; it could yield no supply; and the only solace for the soul was to turn away from it to another and a better world, to the world of spirit; to that world where tyrants do not enter, where wrongs and oppression, sufferings and grief, find no admission; where mutations and insecurity are unknown, and where the poor earth-wanderer, the time-worn pilgrim, may at length find that repose, that fulness of joy which he craved, which he sought but found not below. This view was natural, it was inevitable; and it could lead only to exclusive spiritualism — mysticism.

But when the external world has been somewhat meliorated, and men find that they have some security for their persons and property, that they may count with some degree of certainty on to-morrow, faith in the material order is produced and confirmed. One improvement prepares another. —

Success inspires confidence in future efforts. And this was the case at the epoch of the Reformation. Men had already made great progress in the material order, in their temporal weal. Their faith in it kept pace with their progress, or more properly, outran it. It continued to extend till it became almost entire and universal. The Eighteenth Century will be marked in the annals of the world for its strong faith in the material order. Meliorations on the broadest scale were contemplated and viewed as already realized. Our Republic sprang into being, and the world leaped with joy that "a man child was born." Social progress and the perfection of governments became the religious creed of the day; the weal of man on earth, the spring and aim of all hopes and labors. A new paradise was imaged forth for man, inaccessible to the serpent, more delightful than that which Adam lost, and more attractive than that which the pious Christian hopes to gain. We of this generation can form only a faint conception of the strong faith our fathers had in the progress of society, the high hopes of human improvement they indulged, and the joy too big for utterance, with which they heard France in loud and kindling tones proclaim LIBERTY and EQUALITY. France for a moment

became the centre of the world. All eyes were fixed on her movements. The pulse stood still when she and her enemies met, and loud cheers burst from the universal heart of Humanity when her tri-colored flag was seen to wave in triumph over the battle field. There was then no stray thought for God and eternity. Man and the world filled the soul. They were too big for it. But while the voice of Hope was yet ringing, and *Te Deum* shaking the arches of the old Cathedrals, — the Convention, the reign of Terror, the exile of patriots, the massacre of the gifted, the beautiful and the good, Napoleon and the Military Despotism came, and Humanity uttered a piercing shriek, and fell prostrate on the grave of her hopes !

The reaction produced by the catastrophe of this memorable drama was tremendous. There are still lingering among us those who have not forgotten the recoil they experienced when they saw the Republic swallowed up, or preparing to be swallowed up, in the Empire. Men never feel what they felt but once. The pang which darts through their souls changes them into stone. — From that moment enthusiasm died, hope in social melioration ceased to be indulged, and those who

had been the most sanguine in their anticipations, hung down their heads and said nothing; the warmest friends of Humanity apologized for their dreams of Liberty and Equality; Democracy became an accusation, and faith in the perfectibility of mankind a proof of disordered intellect.

In consequence of this reaction, men again despaired of the earth; and when they despair of the earth, they always take refuge in heaven; when man fails them, they always fly to God. They had trusted materialism too far — they would now not trust it at all. They had hoped too much — they would now hope nothing. The future, which had been to them so bright and promising, was now overspread with black clouds; the ocean on which they were anxious to embark was lashed into rage by the storm, and presented only images of dismasted or sinking ships and drowning crews. — They turned back and sighed for the serene past, the quiet and order of old times, for the mystic land of India, where the soul may dissolve in ecstasy and dream of no change.

At the very moment when the sigh had just escaped, that mystic land reappeared. The English, through the East India Company, had brought to light its old Literature and Philosophy, so diverse

from the Literature and Philosophy of modern Europe or of classical antiquity, and men were captivated by their novelty and bewildered by their strangeness. Sir William Jones gave currency to them by his poetical paraphrases and imitations; and the Asiatic Society by its researches placed them within reach of the learned of Europe. The Church rejoiced, for it was like bringing back her long lost mother, whose features she had remembered and was able at once to recognise. — Germany, England, and even France became Oriental. Cicero, and Horace, and Virgil, Æschylus, Euripides, and even Homer, with Jupiter, Apollo and Minerva were forced to bow before Hindoo Bards and Gods of uncouth forms and unutterable names.

The influence of the old Braminical or spiritual world, thus dug up from the grave of centuries, may be traced in all our Philosophy, Art and Literature. It is remarkable in our poets. It moulds the form in Byron, penetrates to the ground in Wordsworth, and entirely predominates in the Schlegels. It causes us to feel a new interest in those writers and those epochs which partake the most of Spiritualism. Those old English writers who were somewhat inclined to mysticism are revived; Plato, who travelled

in the East and brought back its lore which he modified by Western genius and moulded into Grecian forms, is reëdited, commented on, translated and raised to the highest rank among philosophers. The middle ages are reëxamined and found to contain a treasure of romance, acuteness, depth and wisdom, and are deemed by some to be "dark ages" only because we have not light enough to read them.

Materialism in Philosophy is extinct in Germany. It is only a reminiscence in France, and it produces no remarkable work in England or America. Phrenology, which some deem Materialism, has itself struck Materialism with death in Gall's Work, by showing that we are conscious of phenomena within us which no metaphysical alchemy can transmute into sensations.

Protestantism, since the commencement of the present century, in what it has peculiar to itself, has ceased to gain ground. Rationalism in Germany retreats before the Evangelical party; the Genevan Church makes few proselytes; English and American Unitarianism, on the plan of Priestley and Belsham, avowedly material, and being, as it were, the jumping-off place from the Church to absolute infidelity, is evidently on the decline. There is

probably not a man in this country, however much and justly he may esteem Priestley and Belsham, as bold and untiring advocates of reason and of Humanity, who would be willing to assume the defence of all their opinions. On the other hand Catholicism has revived, offered some able apologies for itself, made some eminent proselytes and alarmed many Protestants, even among ourselves.

Indeed every where is seen a decided tendency to Spiritualism. The age has become weary of uncertainty. It sighs for repose. Controversy is nearly ended, and a sentiment is extensively prevailing, that it is a matter of very little consequence what a man believes, or what formulas of worship he adopts, if he only have a right spirit. Men, who a few years ago were staunch Rationalists, now talk of Spiritual Communion ; and many, who could with difficulty be made to admit the inspiration of the Bible, are now ready to admit the inspiration of the sacred books of all nations ; and instead of stumbling at the idea of God's speaking to a few individuals, they see no reason why he should not speak to every body. Some are becoming so spiritual that they see no necessity of matter ; others so refine matter that it can offer no resistance to the will, making it indeed move as the spirit

listeth; others still believe that all wisdom was in the keeping of the priests of ancient India, Egypt, and Persia, and fancy the world has been deteriorating for four thousand years, instead of advancing. Men go out from our midst to Europe, and come back half Catholics, sighing to introduce the architecture, the superstition, the rites and the sacred symbols of the middle ages.

A universal cry is raised against the frigid utilitarianism of the last century. Money-getting, desire for worldly wealth and renown, are spoken of with contempt, and men are evidently leaving the Outward for the Inward, and craving something more fervent, living and soul-kindling. All this proves that we have changed from what we were; that, though Materialism yet predominates and appears to have lost none of its influence, it is becoming a tradition; and that there is a new force collecting to expel it. Protestantism passes into the condition of a reminiscence. Protestant America cannot be aroused against the Catholics. A mob may burn a convent from momentary excitement, but the most protestant of the Protestants among us will petition the Legislature to indemnify the owners. Indeed Protestantism died in the French Revolution, and we are beginning to be-

come disgusted with its dead body. The East has reappeared, and Spiritualism revives; will it again become supreme? Impossible.

CHAPTER VI.

MISSION OF THE PRESENT.

WE of the present century must either dispense with all religious instructions, reproduce Spiritualism or Materialism, or we must build a new Church, organize a new institution free from the imperfections of those which have been.

The first is out of the question. Men cannot live in a perpetual anarchy. They must and will embody their ideas of the True, the Beautiful, and the Good — the Holy, in some institution. They must answer in some way the questions, What is the Holy? What is the true destination of Man?

To reproduce Spiritualism or Materialism, were an anomaly in the development of Humanity. Humanity does not traverse an eternal circle; it advances; it does not come round to its starting-point, but goes onward in one endless career of progress towards the Infinite, the Perfect.

Besides, it is impossible. Were it desirable, neither Spiritualism nor Materialism can to any

considerable extent, or for any great length of time, become predominant. We cannot bring about that state of society which is the indispensable condition of the exclusive dominion of either.

Spiritualism just now revives; its friends may anticipate a victory; but they will be disappointed. Spiritualism, as an exclusive system, reigns only when men have no faith in material interests; and in order to have no faith in material interests, we must virtually destroy them; we must have absolute despotism, a sacerdotal caste, or we must have another Decline and Fall like that of the Roman Empire, and a new irruption like that of the Goths, Vandals and Huns.

None of these things are possible. There are no more Goths, Vandals, or Huns. The North of Europe is civilized. Northern and central Asia is in the process of civilization through the influence of Russia; England is mingling the arts and sciences of the West with the Spiritualism of India; France and the colony of Liberia secure Africa; the Aborigines of this continent will in a few years have vanished before the continued advance of the European races; merchants and missionaries will do the rest. No external forces can then ever be collected to destroy civilization

and compel the human race to commence its work anew.

Internally, modern civilization has nothing to fear. It contains no seeds of destruction. A real advance has been made. A vast fund of experience has been accumulated and is deposited in so many different languages, that we can hardly conceive it possible that it should be wholly lost or greatly diminished. The Art of Printing, unknown to Greek and Roman civilization, multiplies books to such an extent, that it is perfectly idle to dream of any catastrophe, unless it be the destruction of the world itself, which will reduce them to a few precious fragments like those left us of classical antiquity.

There is, too, a remarkable difference in the diffusion of knowledge. In the best days of classical antiquity, the number of the enlightened was but small. The masses were enveloped in thick darkness. Now the masses have been to school, and are going to school. The millions, who then were in darkness, now behold light springing up. The loss of one individual, however prominent he may be, is not felt. Another is immediately found to fill his place.

Liberty exists also to a much greater extent. The rights of man are better comprehended and secured. The individual man is a greater being than he was in Greece or Rome. He has a higher consciousness of his worth, and he is more respected, and his interests are felt to be more sacred.

Labor has become more honorable. In Greece and Rome labor was menial; it was performed by slaves, at least by the ignorant and brutish. Slavery is disappearing. It has only a small corner of the civilized world left to it. As slavery disappears, as labor comes to be performed by freemen, it will rise to the rank of a liberal profession, and men of character and influence will be laborers.

The improvements in the arts of production have become so extensive, and the means of creating and accumulating wealth are so distributed, and the amount of wealth has already become so great and is shared by so many, that it is impossible that there should ever come again a scene of general poverty and wretchedness to make men despair of the earth, and abandon themselves wholly to the dreams of a spirit-land. There must always remain something to hope from the material order, and consequently, whatever may be

the influence of a sudden panic, or a momentary affright, always a check to the absolute dominion of Spiritualism.

Nor can Materialism become sovereign again. It contains the elements of its own defeat. The very discipline, which Materialism demands to support itself, in the end neutralizes its dominion. As soon as men find themselves well off in a worldly point of view, they discover that they have wants which the world does not and cannot satisfy. The training demanded to ensure success in commerce, industrial enterprises, or politics, strengthens faculties which crave something superior to commerce, to mere industry, or to politics. The merchant would not be always estimating the hazards of speculation; he dreams of his retirement from business, his splendid mansion, his refined hospitality, a library, and studious ease; the mechanic looks forward to a time when he shall have leisure to care for something besides merely animal wants; and the politician to his release from the cares and perplexities of a public life, to a quiet retreat, to a dignified old age, spent in plans of benevolence, in aiding the cause of education, religion, or philosophy. This low business world, upon which the moralist and the divine look down

with so much sorrow, is not quite so low after all, as they think it. It is doing a vast deal to develop the intellect. It is full of high and expanded brows.

It is true that money getting, mere physical utility has at this moment a wide influence, and may absorb the mind and heart quite too much. Still the evil is not unmixed. That man, who tortures his brain, spends his days and nights to accumulate a fortune, is much superior to him who is content to rot in poverty, who has no courage, no energy to attempt to improve his condition. He is a better member of society, is worth more to humanity. It is a great day, even for spiritualism, when all the people of a country are carried away in an industrial direction. Speculation may be rife, frauds may be common; many may become rich by means they care not to make known; many may become discontented; there may be much striving this way and that, much effort to get up, keep up, to pull or to push down; but the many will sharpen their faculties, and gain the leisure and the means and the disposition to attend to the spiritual part of their being. It does my heart good to witness the industrial activity of my countrymen. I see very clearly the evils which attend it; but I

also see every year the general level rising, and the moral and intellectual power increasing. So is it too with our political struggles. They quicken thought, give the people the use of language, a consciousness of their power, especially of the power of mind, and upon the whole they do much to elevate the general character. Those quiet times we look back upon and regret, either were not as quiet as we think them, or they were quiet because they had not enough of thought to move them. They were as still, but too often as putrid, as the stagnant pool.

The science which is now introduced into commerce, into the mechanic arts and agricultural pursuits, and which is every day receiving a greater extension and new applications, while it preserves the material order, also keeps alive the spiritual, and gives us a check against the absolute ascendancy of Materialism.

We cannot then go back either to exclusive Spiritualism, or to exclusive Materialism. Both these systems have received so full a development, have acquired so much strength, that neither can be subdued. Both have their foundation in our nature, and both will exist and exert their influence. Shall they exist as antagonist principles? Shall

the spirit forever lust against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit? Is the bosom of Humanity to be eternally torn by these two contending factions? No. It cannot be. The war must end. Peace must be made.

This discloses our Mission. We are to reconcile spirit and matter; that is, we must realize the atonement. Nothing else remains for us to do. — Stand still we cannot. To go back is equally impossible. We must go forward, but we can take not a step forward, but on the condition of uniting these two hitherto hostile principles. PROGRESS is our law and our first step is UNION.

The union of Spirit and Matter was the result contemplated by the mission of Jesus. The Church attempted it, but only partially succeeded, and has therefore died. The time had not come for the complete union. Jesus saw this. He knew that the age in which he lived would not be able to realize his conception. He therefore spoke of his "second coming." The Church has always had a vague presentiment of its own death, and the birth of a new era when Christ should really reign on earth. For a long time the hierophants have fixed upon ours as the epoch of the commencement of the new order of things. Some

have gone even so far as to name this very year, 1836, as the beginning of what they call the Millennium.

The particular shape which has been assigned to this new order, this "latter day glory," the name by which it has been designated, amounts to nothing. That some have anticipated a personal appearance of Jesus, and a resurrection of the saints, should not induce us to treat with disrespect the almost unanimous belief of Christendom in a fuller manifestation of Christian truth, and in a more special reign of Christ in a future epoch of the world. All the presentiments of Humanity are to be respected. Humanity has a prophetic power. — "Coming events cast their shadows before."

The "second coming" of Christ will be when the Idea which he represents, that is, the Idea of atonement, shall be fully realized. That Idea will be realized by a combination, a union, of the two terms which have received thus far from the Church only a separate development. This union the Church has always had a presentiment of; it has looked forward to it, prayed for it; and we are still praying for it, for we still say, "Let thy kingdom come." Nobody believes that the Gospel has completed its work. The Church universal

and eternal is not yet erected. The corner stone is laid ; the materials are prepared. Let then the workmen come forth with joy, and bid the Temple rise. Let them embody the true Idea of the God-Man, and Christ will then have come a second time ; he will have come in power and great glory, and he will reign, and the whole earth will be glad.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIAN SECTS.

THIS age must realize the Atonement, the union of Spirit and Matter, the destruction of all Antagonism and the production of universal peace.

God has appointed us to build the new Church, the one which shall bring the whole family of Man within its sacred enclosure, which shall be able to abide the ravages of time, and against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail."

But we can do this only by a general doctrine which enables us to recognise and accept all the elements of Humanity. If we leave out any one element of our nature, we shall have antagonism. Our system will be incomplete and the element excluded will be forever rising up in rebellion against it and collecting forces to destroy its authority.

All sects overlook this important truth. None of them seem to imagine that human nature has or

should have any hand in the construction of their theories. Instead of studying human nature, ascertaining its elements and its wants, and seeking to conform to them, every sect labors to conform human nature to its own creed. No one dreams of moulding its dogmas to human nature, but every one would mould human nature to its dogmas. Every one is a bed of Procrustes. What is too short must be stretched, what is too long must be docked. No sect ever looks to human nature as the measure of truth ; but all look to what they are pleased to call the truth, as the measure of human nature.

This were well enough if human nature had only been made of wax, or some other ductile material. But unfortunately it is very stubborn. It will not bend. It will not be mutilated. Its laws are permanent and universal ; each one of them is eternal and indestructible. They war in vain who war against them. Be they good or be they bad, we must accept them, we must submit to them and do the best we can with them.

But human nature is well made, its laws are just and holy, its elements are true and divine. And this is the hidden sense of that symbol of the God-Man. That symbol teaches all who compre-

hend it, to find Divinity in Humanity, and Humanity in Divinity. By presenting us God and Man united in one person, it shows us that both are holy. The Father and the Son are one. Therefore we are commanded to honor the Son as we honor the Father, Humanity as Divinity, Man as well as God. But the Church has never understood this. No sect now understands it. Hence the contempt with which all sects treat human nature, and their entire want of confidence in it as a criterion of truth. They must correct themselves. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

To reject human nature and declare it unworthy of confidence as the Church did, and as all sects now do, is — whether we know it or not — to reject all grounds of certainty, and to declare that we have no means of distinguishing truth from falsehood. Truth itself is nothing else to us than that which our nature by some one or all of its faculties compels us to believe. The fact that God has made us a revelation does not in the least impair this assertion. God has revealed to us truths which we could not of ourselves have discovered. But how do we know this? What is it but the human mind that can determine whether

God has or has not spoken to us? What but the human mind can ascertain and fix the meaning of what he may have communicated? If we may not trust the human mind, human nature, how can we ever be sure that a revelation has been made? or how distinguish a real revelation from a pretended one? By miracles? But how determine that what are alleged to be miracles, really are miracles? or the more difficult question still, that the miracles, admitting them to be genuine, do necessarily involve the truth of the doctrines they are wrought to prove? Shall we be told that we must believe the revelation is a true one, because made by an authorized teacher? Where is the warrant of his authority? What shall assure us that the warrant is not a forgery? Have we any thing but our own nature with which to answer these and a hundred more questions like them and equally important?

If human nature has the ability and the right to answer these questions, where are the limits of its ability and its right? If we trust it when it assures us God has spoken to us, and when it interprets what he has spoken, where shall we not trust it? If it be no criterion of truth, why do we trust it here? And if it be, why do we disclaim it else-

where? Why declare it worthy of confidence in one case and not in another? It is the same in all cases, in all its degrees; and whether it testifies to that which is little, or to that which is great, it is the same, and its testimony is of precisely the same validity.

If we admit that human nature is the measure of truth, — of truth for us, human beings — then we admit that it is the criterion by which all sects must be tested. It is then the touchstone of truth. Every sect must be approved or condemned according to its decision. No sect must blame Humanity for not believing its doctrines. If after they have been fairly presented and fully comprehended they are rejected, they are proved to be false, or at least to be only partially true. It is no recommendation to advocate doctrines repugnant to human nature; nor is it any reproach to defend those which are pleasing to the natural heart. Humanity loves the truth and can be satisfied with nothing else. The sect, then, which ceases to make converts should abandon or enlarge its creed.

Sects in general are and will be slow to learn this truth. Each sect, because it has all the truth to be seen from its stand-point, takes it for granted that it has the whole truth. It does not even

dream that there may be other stand-points, from which other truths may be seen, or the same truths under other aspects; and therefore it concludes when its doctrines are rejected, that they are rejected because human nature is perverse or impotent, because men cannot or will not see the truth, or because they naturally hate it. Let it change its position and it will soon learn that the horizon, which it took to be the boundary of truth, was in fact only the boundary of its own vision.

All sects, however, have their truth and are serviceable to Humanity. Each one has a special doctrine which gives prominence to some one element of our nature, and is therefore satisfactory to all in whom that element predominates. But as that element, however important a one it may be, is not the whole of human nature, and as it can hardly be predominant alike in all men, no sect can satisfy entire Humanity. Each sect does something to develope and satisfy the separate elements of Humanity, but no one can develope and satisfy all the elements of Humanity and satisfy them as a whole.

Spiritualism and Materialism are the two most comprehensive sectarian doctrines which have ever been proclaimed. But neither of these is

comprehensive enough. Either may satisfy a large class of wants, but each must leave a class equally as large unsatisfied. One has always been opposed by the other, and mutual opposition has finally destroyed them both. Humanity is still sighing for what it has not. It is seeking rest but finds none. And rest it will not find, till its untiring friends gain a stand-point, from which, as with one grand panoramic view, they may take in all its elements in their relative proportions, and exact distances, in their diversity and in their unity, till they have gone up and down the earth and collected and brought together its disjointed members, which contending sects have torn asunder, and moulded them into one complete and lovely form of truth and holiness.

Where is the Christian sect that is engaged in this work? Where is the one that deems it desirable or possible? All the sects of Christendom, so far as it concerns their dominant tendency, fall into the category of Spiritualism, or into that of Materialism. Catholicism is virtually the Church of the middle ages. It is but a reminiscence. It has no life, at least no healthy existence. It belongs to Spiritualism. Calvinism, bating some few modifications produced by Prot-

estant influence, is only a continuation of Catholicism. It is decidedly Spiritualistic. Its prayers, its hymns and homilies are deeply imprinted with Spiritualism. It repels the material order, and exhorts us to crucify the flesh, to disregard the world and to think only of God, the soul and eternity.

In the opinion of the Calvinist, the world lies under the curse of the Almighty. It is a wretched land, a vale of tears, of disease and death. There is no happiness below. It is vain, almost impious, to wish it till death comes to release us from the infirmities of the flesh. As long as we live we sin; we must carry about a weary load, an overwhelming burthen, a body of death. Man is a poor, depraved creature. He is smitten with a curse, and the curse spreads over his whole nature. There is nothing good within him. Of himself he can obtain, he can do, nothing good. He is unclean in the sight of God. His sacrifices are an abomination, and his holiest prayers are sinful. His will is perverted; his affections are all on the side of evil; his reason is deprived of its light, it is blind and impotent, and will lead those who trust to its guidance down to hell.

By its doctrine of "Foreordination," Calvinism annihilates man. It allows him no independent

causality. It permits him to move only as a pre-ordaining and irresistible will moves him. It makes him a thing, not a person, with properties but without faculties or rights. Whatever his destiny, however cruel, he has no right to complain. Spirit is absolute and has the right to receive him into blessedness or send him away into everlasting punishment, without any regard to his own wishes, merit or demerit. Hence Calvinists always give supremacy to the Spiritual order. They fled from England to this then wilderness world, because they would not conform to a Church established by the state; and when here they constituted the Church superior to the state. In theory the Pilgrims made the state a mere function of the Church. In order to be a citizen it was necessary that one should first be a church member. And for the last twenty years the great body of Calvinists throughout our whole country have been exerting all their skill and influence to raise the Church to that eminence from which it may overlook the state, control its deliberations and decide its measures.

His doctrine of "hereditary total Depravity" has always compelled the Calvinist to reject Reason and to rely on Authority — to seek faith, not con-

viction. Protestant influences prevent him in these days from submitting to an infallible Pope, but he indemnifies himself by infallible creeds, councils, synods and assemblies. Or if these fail him, he can ascribe infallibility to the "written Word." Always does he prohibit himself the free exercise of his own understanding, and prescribe bounds beyond which reason and reasoning must not venture.

By the dogma of Christ's vicarious death, he takes his stand decidedly with Spiritualism, denies the Atonement, loses sight of the Mediator, and rejects the God-Man. He cannot then build the new Church, the Church truly universal and eternal. It is in vain that we ask him to destroy all antagonism. He does not even wish to do it; before the foundations of the world, its origin and eternity were decreed. God and the devil, the saint and the sinner, in his estimation, are alike immortal.

Universalism would seem to a superficial observer to be what we need. Its friends call it the doctrine of universal reconciliation, and they group around the love of God that which constitutes the real harmony and unity of creation. But Universalists do not understand themselves. They have

a vague sense of the truth, but not a clear perception of it. As soon as they begin to explain themselves, they file off either to the ranks of Spiritualism, or of Materialism.

The larger number of Universalists, among whom is, or was, the chief of the sect, contend that all sin originates in the flesh and must end with it. The flesh ends at death, when it is deposited in the tomb; therefore, "he that is dead is freed from sin." Sin is the cause of all suffering; when sin ends, suffering ends. Sin ends at death, and therefore after death no suffering, but universal happiness.

This doctrine is as decidedly Spiritualism as oriental Spiritualism itself. If the body be the cause of all sin, it certainly deserves no respect. It is a vile thing, and should be despised, mortified, punished, annihilated. Universalists do not draw this inference, but they avoid it only by really denying that there is any sin, or at least by considering the consequences of sin of too little importance to be dreaded.

The body, however, according to this doctrine is a curse. Man would be better off without it than he is with it. It deserves nothing on its own account. Wherefore then shall I labor to

make it comfortable? I shall be released from it to-morrow, and enter into a world of unutterable joy. Let my lodging to-night be on the bare ground, in the open air, destitute of a few conveniences, what imports it? Can I not afford to forego a pleasant lodging for one night, since I am ever after to be filled and overflowing with blessedness? Universalism, then, according to this exposition of it, must inevitably lead to neglect of the material order. Its legitimate result would be, not licentiousness, but a dreaming, contemplative life, wasting itself away in idleness, watching the motion of the sun, and wishing it to move faster, so that we may be the sooner translated from this miserable world, where nothing is worth laboring for, to our Father's kingdom where is music and dancing, songs and feasting forever and ever.

Universalists have, however, existing side by side with this exclusive Spiritualism, some strong tendencies to Materialism. Spiritualism and Materialism are nearly balanced in their minds, and constitute, not a union of spirit and matter, but a parallelism which has no tendency to union. But when the true doctrine of the Atonement is proclaimed, Universalists will be among the first believers. None will rejoice more than they, to see

the new Church rise from the ruins of the old, and none will attend more readily or with more zeal at its consecration.

Unitarianism belongs to the material order. It is the last word of Protestantism, before Protestantism breaks entirely with the Past. It is the point towards which all Protestant sects converge in proportion as they gain upon their reminiscences. Every consistent Protestant Christian must be a Unitarian. Unitarianism elevates man; it preaches morality; it vindicates the rights of the mind, accepts and uses the reason, contends for civil freedom, and is social, charitable and humane. It saves the Son of man, but sometimes loses the Son of God.

But it is from the Unitarians that must come out the doctrine of universal reconciliation; for they are the only denomination in Christendom that labors to rest religious faith on rational conviction; that seeks to substitute reason for authority, to harmonize religion and science, or that has the requisite union of piety and mental freedom, to elaborate the doctrine which is to realize the Atonement. The orthodox, as they are called, are disturbed by their memory. Their faces are on the back side of their heads. They have zeal, energy, perseverance, but their ideas belong to the past. The Universalists

can do nothing till some one arises to give them a philosophy. They must comprehend their instincts, before they can give to their doctrine of reconciliation that character which will adapt it to the wants of entire Humanity.

But Unitarians are every day breaking away more and more from tradition, and every day making new progress in the creation of a philosophy which explains Humanity, determines its wants and the means of supplying them. Mind at this moment is extremely active among them, and as it can act freely it will most certainly elaborate the great doctrine required. They began in Rationalism. Their earlier doctrines were dry and cold. And this was necessary. They were called at first to a work of destruction. They were under the necessity of clearing away the rubbish of the old Church, before they could obtain a site whereon to erect the new one. The Unitarian preacher was under the necessity of raising a stern and commanding voice in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." He raised that voice, and the chief Priests and Pharisees in modern Judea heard and trembled, and some have gone forth to be baptised. The Unitarian has baptised them with water unto repentance, but he has borne

witness that a mightier than he shall come after him, who shall baptise them with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

When the Unitarian appeared, there was on this whole earth no spot for the Temple of the living God, the temple of Reason, Love and Peace. For such a spot he contended. He has obtained it. He has begun the Temple ; its foundations already appear, and although the workmen must yet work with their arms in one hand, he will see it completed, consecrated, and filled with the glory of the Lord.

CHAPTER VIII.

INDICATIONS OF THE ATONEMENT.

THE Church was the result of three causes, the Asiatic conquests of the Romans, the Alexandrian school of Philosophy, and the Christian movement of the people.

By the Asiatic conquests of the Romans, Spiritualism and Materialism were brought together upon the same theatre, and placed in the condition necessary to their union. Eastern and Western ideas were mingled in strange confusion throughout the whole of the Roman Empire during the first three centuries of our era, and the attempt to unite them, to combine them into a regular and harmonious system could hardly fail to be made.

This attempt was made by the Alexandrian Philosophers. These Philosophers called themselves eclectics. Their avowed object was to unite the East and the West, European and Asiatic ideas, to reduce to a regular system the ideas of all the various schools of philosophy. They did it as

perfectly as they could with the lights they had and the experiments they had made.

The Christian movement of the people was apparently very unlike that of the Alexandrian. The early Christians were the farthest in the world from being philosophers. They were inspired. They were moved by an impulse of which they asked, and could have given no account. God moved in them, and spoke through them; gave them a lofty enthusiasm, a resistless energy of character, and prepared them to do, to dare and to suffer any thing and every thing. At his command they went forth to conquer the world, and they did conquer it; not, as it has been well remarked, by killing, but by dying.*

We understand to-day what it was that moved the early Christians. What was inspiration in them is philosophy in us. They had an instinctive sense of the synthesis of Spirit and Matter. Yet they thought nothing of Spirit and Matter. They disturbed themselves not in the least with Spiritualism and Materialism, with the East and the West, with Europe and Asia. They saw mankind sunk in sin and misery, weary and heavy laden, and they

* Benjamin Constant.

went forth strong in the Lord to raise them to virtue, to convert them to Christ and to give them rest. They did not speculate, they did not reason—they saw and felt and acted.

These and the Alexandrians met, and the Church was the result. The share of the Alexandrians in the construction of the Church has always been acknowledged to be very great. Perhaps it was greater than any have suspected. Certain it is that they furnished the Fathers their philosophy, and they may be pronounced without much hesitation, the real elaborators—not of Christianity, but—of the dogmas of the Church.

All men feel more or less the desire to account to themselves for what they are. For a time they may be carried away by a force not their own, and they may be so engrossed with varied and exciting action and events, that they have no time to think; but at the first moments of calmness and self-consciousness they will ask what has moved them, what was the power which carried them away and whither have they been borne. This was the case with the early Christians. The first excitement over, and the visits of inspiration having become less frequent, they desired to explain themselves to themselves, to give a name to the instincts they

had obeyed, to the Divinity which had moved them, and to the destiny they had been fulfilling. The Alexandrians answered all their questions. They explained the Christians to themselves, and henceforth their explanations were counted Christianity.

These three causes of the old Church, or analogous ones, reappear to-day for the first time since that Epoch; and is not their reappearance an indication that a new Church is about to be built?

The East and the West are again on the same theatre. The British by means of their East India Company have reconquered the father-land of Spiritualism, and brought up from the graves of ages its old Literature and Philosophy, and mingled them with those of the West, the father-land of Materialism. The Church itself has introduced not a little Spiritualism into Christian civilisation, while Protestantism by encouraging the study of the classics has reproduced Greece and Rome. The two worlds, the two civilisations, the two systems to be atoned or united are now in very nearly the same relative condition as they were at the birth of the Church. They are thrown together into the crucible.

Alexandria, too, is reproduced with the modifications and improvements which two thousand years could not fail to effect. Eclecticism is declared to be the philosophy of the nineteenth century. Not one of the exclusive systems, which obtained during the last century, has now any life. Materialism is a tradition even in France; Idealism has exhausted itself in Germany, and England has no philosophy.

Schelling had at least a presentiment of Eclecticism in his doctrine of Identity; Hegel has greatly abridged the labors of its friends; Fries and his disciples observe its method, and Jacobi virtually embraced it. In our own country it has produced no great work, and perhaps will not; but it is avowed by many of the best minds among us, and is the only philosophy we have, that has not ceased to make proselytes.

In France, however, Eclecticism has received its fullest developments. M. Cousin has all but perfected it. He has presented us the last results of the philosophical labors of his predecessors and contemporaries, and furnished us with a method by which we may construct a philosophy which may truly be called the Science of the Absolute, a philosophy which need not fear the mutations of

time and space, and may be sure that its sovereignty will be complete and undisputed as fast and as far as it comes to be understood.

M. Cousin has not only given us, as it were, a geometrical demonstration of the existence of Nature and of God, but he has also demonstrated that Humanity, Nature and God have precisely the same laws, that what we find in Nature and Humanity we may also find in God, and that when we have once risen to God, we may come back and find again in Nature and Humanity all that we had found in him. This at once destroys all antithesis between Spirit and Matter, between God and man, gives man a kindred nature with God, makes him an image or manifestation of God, and paves the way for universal reconciliation and peace.* If God be holy, man, inasmuch as he has the very elements of the Divinity, is also holy. God and man may then unite in an everlasting and holy union, Justice and

* See my Article on Cousin's Philosophy in the Christian Examiner, for September, 1836. Also, Cousin's Philosophical Works every where, especially the V. and VI. Lectures of his "Cours," in 1828, and the Preface to the 2d Edition of his *Fragmens philosophiques*.

Mercy kiss each other, and — all antagonism is destroyed.

The third cause, the inspiration of the people, is no less remarkable now than it was in the first centuries of our era. When God would produce a great result, one which requires the coöperation of vast multitudes, he does not merely inspire one man; he does not speak plainly in distinct propositions to a few, and leave them to speak to the many; but he gives an impulse to the masses, and carries away all the world in the direction of the object to be gained. People seem to themselves to be acting from their own impulses, and to be obeying their own convictions; but they are borne along by an invisible and resistless power towards an end of which they have a vague presentiment, but no distinct vision.

This is the case now. The time has come for a new Church, for a new synthesis of the elements of the life of Humanity. The end to be attained is Union. How would an inspiration designed to give the energy, the power to attain this end be most likely to manifest itself; in what way could it manifest itself but by giving the people an irresistible longing for union, and a tendency to unite, to associate on all occasions and for all purposes

not inconsistent with union itself? And what is the most striking characteristic of this age? Is it not the tendency to association, a tendency so strong that it appears to the cool spectator like a monomania?

This tendency shows itself every where. All over Christendom, men seem mad for associations. They associate for almost every thing, to promote science, literature, art and industry, to circulate the Bible, to distribute religious tracts, to diffuse useful knowledge, to improve and extend education, to meliorate governments and laws, to soften the rigors of the prison-house, to aid the sick, to relieve the poor, to prevent pauperism, to free the slave, to send out missionaries, and to evangelize the world. And — what deserves to be remarked — all these associations, various as they are, really propose in every instance a great and glorious end. They all are formed for useful, moral, religious, philosophical, philanthropical or humane purposes. They may be badly managed, they may fail in accomplishing what they propose, but that which they propose deserves to be accomplished. Sectarians may control them; but in all cases their ends are broader than any sect, than all sects, and they alike commend themselves to the

consciences and the prayers of mankind. In some of these associations, sects long and widely separated come together, and find to their mutual satisfaction that they have a common ground, and a ground which each one instinctively admits to be higher and holier than any merely sectarian ground.

This tendency too is triumphing over all obstacles. Sects, which opposed this or that association because principally under the control of this or that sect, have slowly and reluctantly ceased their opposition, and have finally acquiesced. Individuals, who for a time resorted to ridicule and abuse to check associations, are now silent, and they stand amazed as did those who listened to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. Those who apprehended great evils from them now seek to withstand them only by counter associations. To resist them is in fact out of the question. One might as well resist the whirlwind. There is a more than human power at the bottom of them. They come from God, from a divine inspiration given to the people to build the new Church and realize the Atonement, a universal and everlasting association.

This tendency or inspiration will, in a few days, meet the Eclectic movement, if it have not already met it; and what shall prevent a result similar to that which followed the meeting of the early Christian inspiration and the Alexandrian Eclecticism? This inspiration is, indeed, at this moment, apparently blind, but it and Modern Philosophy tend to the same end. They have then the same truth at bottom. They must then have a natural affinity with one another. They will then come together. The philosophy will explain and enlighten the inspiration. They who are now mad for associations will comprehend the power which has moved them, they will see the end towards which they have been tending without their knowing it, and they will give to the philosopher in return zeal, energy, enthusiasm, and there will then be both the Light and the Force needed to construct the new Church.

And I think I see some indications that this meeting of inspiration and philosophy is already taking place. Something like it has occurred in Germany, in that movement commenced by Herder, but best represented by Schleiermacher, a man remarkable for warmth of feeling, and coolness of thought, a preacher and a philosopher, a theologian

and a man of science, a student and a man of business. It was attempted in France, where it gave birth to "Nouveau Christianisme," but without much success, because it is not a new Christianity but a new Church that is required.

But the plainest indications of it are at home. In this country more than in any other is the man of thought united in the same person with the man of action. The people here have a strong tendency to profound and philosophic thought, as well as to skilful, energetic and persevering action. The time is not far distant when our whole population will be philosophers, and all our philosophers will be practical men. This is written on almost every man's brow in characters so plain that he who runs may read. This characteristic of our population fits us above all other nations to bring out and realize great and important ideas. Here too is the freedom which other nations want, and the faith in ideas which can be found nowhere else. Philosophers in other countries may think and construct important theories, but they can realize them only to a very limited extent. But here every idea may be at once put to a practical test, and if true it will be realized. We have the field, the liberty, the disposition and the faith to work with ideas.

It is here then that must first be brought out and realized the true idea of the Atonement. We already seem to have a consciousness of this, and it is therefore that we are not and cannot be surprised to find the union of popular inspiration with profound philosophical thought manifesting itself more clearly here than any where else.

The representative of this union here is a body of individuals rather than a single individual. The many with us are every thing, the individual almost nothing. One man, however, stands out from this body, a more perfect type of the synthesis of Eclecticism and inspiration than any one else. I need not name him. Philosophers consult him, and the people hear his voice and follow him. His connexion with a particular denomination may have exposed him to some unfriendly criticism, but he is in truth one of the most popular men of the age. His voice finds a response in the mind and in the heart of Humanity.

His active career commenced with the new century, in the place where it should, and in the only place where it could,—in the place where a Republic had been born and Liberty had received her grandest developments and her surest safeguards. There he has continued, and there he has been

foremost in laying the foundation of that new Church which will soon rise to greet the morning ray, and in which a glad voice will chant the hymn of peace to the evening sun. Few men are so remarkable for their union of deep religious feeling with sound reflection, of sobriety with popular enthusiasm. He reveres God and he reverences man. When he speaks he convinces and kindles.

When Rationalism was attacked he appeared in its defence and proclaimed, in a language which still rings in our ears, the imprescriptible rights of the mind. After the first shock of the war upon Rationalism had been met, and a momentary truce tacitly declared, he brought out in an Ordination Sermon the great truth which destroys all antagonism and realizes the Atonement. In that Sermon — the most remarkable since the Sermon on the Mount — he distinctly recognises and triumphantly vindicates the God-Man. “In ourselves are the elements of the Divinity. God then does not sustain a figurative resemblance to man. It is the resemblance of a parent to a child, THE LIKENESS OF A KINDRED NATURE.” In this sublime declaration, the Son of God is owned. Humanity, after so many years of vain search for a Father, finds itself here openly proclaimed the true child of God.

This declaration gives us the hidden sense of the symbol of the God-Man. By asserting the Divinity of Humanity, it teaches us that we should not view that symbol as the symbol of two natures in one person, but of kindred natures in two persons. The God-Man indicates not the antithesis of God and man; nor does it stand for a being alone of its kind; but it indicates the homogeneousness of the human and divine natures, and shows that they can dwell together in love and peace. The Son of Man and the Son of God are not two persons but one — a mystery which becomes clear the very moment that the human nature is discovered to have a sameness with the Divine.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ATONEMENT.

THE great doctrine, which is to realize the Atonement and which the Symbol of the God-Man now teaches us, is that all things are essentially holy, that every thing is cleansed, and that we must call nothing common or unclean.

“And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.” And what else could it have been? God is wise, powerful and good; and how can a wise, powerful and good being create evil? God is the great Fountain from which flows every thing that is; how then can there be any thing but good in existence?

Neither Spiritualism nor Materialism was aware of this truth. Spiritualism saw good only in pure Spirit. God was pure Spirit and therefore good; but all which could be distinguished from him was evil, and only evil and that continually. Our good consisted in resemblance to God, that is, in being as like pure Spirit as possible. Our duty

was to get rid of Matter. All the interests of the material order were sinful. St. Augustine declared the flesh, that is the body, to be sin; perfection then could be obtained only by neglecting, and as far as possible, annihilating it. Materialism, on the other hand, had no recognition of Spirit. It considered all time and thought and labor bestowed on that which transcends this world as worse than thrown away. It had no conception of inward communion with God. It counted fears of punishment or hopes of reward in a world to come mere idle fancies, fit only to amuse or control the vulgar. It laughed at spiritual joys and griefs, and treated as serious affairs only the pleasures and pains of sense.

But the new doctrine of the Atonement reconciles these two warring systems. This doctrine teaches us that spirit is real and holy, that matter is real and holy, that God is holy and that man is holy, that spiritual joys and griefs, and the pleasures and pains of sense, are alike real joys and griefs, real pleasures and pains, and in their places are alike sacred. Spirit and Matter, then, are saved. One is not required to be sacrificed to the other; both may and should coexist as separate elements of the same grand and harmonious whole.

The influence of this doctrine cannot fail to be very great. It will correct our estimate of man, of the world, of religion and of God, and remodel all our institutions. It must in fact create a new civilisation as much in advance of ours, as ours is in advance of that which obtained in the Roman Empire in the time of Jesus.

Hitherto we have considered man as the antithesis of all good. We have loaded him with reproachful epithets and made it a sin in him even to be born. We have uniformly deemed it necessary to degrade him in order to exalt his Creator. But this will end. The slave will become a son. Man is hereafter to stand erect before God as a child before its father. Human nature, at which we have pointed our wit and vented our spleen, will be clothed with a high and commanding worth. It will be seen to be a lofty and deathless nature. It will be felt to be Divine, and Infinite will be found traced in living characters on all its faculties.

We shall not treat one another then as we do now. Man will be sacred in the eyes of man. To wrong him will be more than crime, it will be sin. To labor to degrade him will seem like laboring to degrade the Divinity. Man will reverence man.

Slavery will cease. Man will shudder at the bare idea of enslaving so noble a being as man. It will seem to him hardly less daring than to presume to task the motions of the Deity and to compel him to come and go at our bidding. When man learns the true value of man, the chains of the captive must be unloosed and the fetters of the slave fall off.

Wars will fail. The sword will be beaten into the ploughshare and the spear into the pruning hook. Man will not dare to mar and mangle the shrine of the Divinity. The God looking out from human eyes will disarm the soldier and make him kneel to him he had risen up to slay. The war-horse will cease to bathe his fetlocks in human gore. He will snuff the breeze in the wild freedom of his native plains, or quietly submit to be harnessed to the plough. The hero's occupation will be gone, and heroism will be found only in saving and blessing human life.

Education will destroy the empire of ignorance. The human mind, allied as it is to the Divine, is too valuable to lie waste or to be left to breed only briars and thorns. Those children, ragged and incrustated with filth, which throng our streets, and for whom we must one day build prisons, forge

bolts and bars, or erect gibbets, are not only our children, our brother's children, but they are children of God, they have in themselves the elements of the Divinity and powers which when put forth will raise them above what the tallest archangel now is. And when this is seen and felt, will those children be left to fester in ignorance or to grow up in vice and crime? The whole energy of man's being cries out against such folly, such gross injustice.

Civil freedom will become universal. It will be every where felt that one man has no right over another which that other has not over him. All will be seen to be brothers and equals in the sight of their common Father. All will love one another too much to desire to play the tyrant. Human nature will be revered too much not to be allowed to have free scope for the full and harmonious development of all its faculties. Governments will become sacred; and while on the one hand they are respected and obeyed, on the other it will be felt to be a religious right and a religious duty, to labor to make them as perfect as they can be.

Religion will not stop with the command to obey the laws, but it will bid us make just laws, such

laws as befit a being divinely endowed like man. The Church will be on the side of progress, and Spiritualism and Materialism will combine to make man's earthly condition as near like the lost Eden of the Eastern poets, as is compatible with the growth and perfection of his nature.

Industry will be holy. The cultivation of the earth will be the worship of God. Working-men will be priests, and as priests they will be revered, and as priests they will reverence themselves and feel that they must maintain themselves undefiled. He that ministers at the altar must be pure, will be said of the mechanic, the agriculturist, the common laborer, as well as of him who is technically called a priest.

The earth itself and the animals which inhabit it will be counted sacred. We shall study in them the manifestation of God's goodness, wisdom, and power, and be careful that we make of them none but a holy use.

Man's body will be deemed holy. It will be called the temple of the Living God. As a temple it must not be desecrated. Men will beware of defiling it by sin, by any excessive or improper indulgence, as they would of defiling the temple or the altar consecrated to the service of God. Man

will reverence himself too much, he will see too much of the Holy in his nature ever to pervert it from the right line of Truth and Duty.

“In that day shall there be on the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the Lord’s house shall be as the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be Holiness unto the Lord of hosts.” The words of the prophet will be fulfilled. All things proceed from God and are therefore holy. Every duty, every act necessary to be done, every implement of industry, or thing contributing to human use or convenience, will be treated as holy. We shall recall even the reverence of the Indian for his bow and arrow, and by enlightening it with a Divine philosophy preserve it.

“Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” Religious worship will not be the mere service of the sanctuary. The universe will be God’s temple, and its service will be the doing of good to mankind, relieving suffering and promoting joy, virtue and well-being. By this, religion and morality will be united, and the service of God and the service of man become the

same. Our faith in God will show itself by our good works to man. Our love to the Father, whom we have not seen, will be evinced by our love for our brother whom we have seen.

Church and State will become one. The State will be holy, and the Church will be holy. Both will aim at the same thing, and the existence of one as separate from the other will not be needed. The Church will not be then an outward visible power, coexisting with the State, sometimes controlling it and at other times controlled by it; but it will be within, a true spiritual — not spiritualistic — Church, regulating the heart, the conscience and the life.

And when this all takes place the glory of the Lord will be manifested unto the ends of the earth, and all flesh will see it and rejoice together. The time is yet distant before this will be fully realized. We are now realizing it in our theory. We assert the holiness of all things. This assertion becomes an idea, and ideas, if they are true, are omnipotent. As soon as Humanity fully possesses this idea, it will lose no time in reducing it to practice. Men will conform their practice to it. They will become personally holy. Holiness will be written on all their thoughts, emotions and actions, on their

whole lives. And then will Christ really be formed within, the hope of glory. He will be truly incarnated in universal Humanity, and God and man will be one.

CHAPTER X.

PROGRESS.

THE actual existence of evil, the effects of which are every where so visible, and apparently so deplorable, may seem to be a serious objection to the great doctrine of the Atonement, that all things are essentially good and holy ; but it will present little difficulty, if we consider that God designed us to be progressive beings, and that we can be progressive beings only on the condition that we be made less perfect than we may become, that we have our point of departure at a distance from our point of destination. We must begin in weakness and ignorance ; and if we begin in weakness and ignorance we cannot fail to miss our way, or frequently to want strength to pursue it. To err in judgment or to come short in action will be our unavoidable lot, until we are instructed by experience and strengthened by exertion.

But this is no ground of complaint. We gain more than we lose by it. Had we without any

agency of our own been made all that by a proper cultivation of our faculties we may become, we should have been much inferior to what we now are. We could have had no want, no desire, no good to seek, no end to gain, no destiny to achieve — no employment, and no motive to action. Our existence would have been aimless, silent and unvaried, given apparently for no purpose but to be dreamed away in an eternal and unbroken repose. Who could desire such an existence? Who would prefer it to the existence we now have, liable to error, sin and misery as it may be?

Constituted as we are, the way is more than the end, the acquisition more than the possession; but had we been made at once all that is promised us by our nature, these would have been nothing; we should indeed have had the end, the possession, but that would have been all. We should have been men without having first been children. Our earlier life, its trials and temptations, its failures and its successes, would never have existed. Would we willingly forego that earlier life? Dear to all men is the memory of childhood and youth; dear too is the recollection of their difficulties and dangers, their struggles with the world or with our own passions. We may regret, do regret, suffer

remorse, that we did not put ourselves forth with more energy, that the enemy with which we had to contend was not more manfully met; but who of us is the craven to wish those difficulties and dangers had been less, or that the enemy's forces had been fewer and weaker?

God gave his richest gift when he gave the capacity for progress. This capacity is the chief glory of our nature, the brightest signature of its Divine origin and the pledge of its immortality. The being which can make no farther progress, which has finished its work, achieved its destiny, attained its end, must die. Why should it live? How could it live? What would be its life? But man never attains his end; he never achieves his destiny; he never finishes his work; he has always something to do, some new acquisition to make, some new height of excellence to ascend, and therefore is he immortal. He cannot die, for his hour never comes. He is never ready. Who would then be deprived of his capacity for progress?

This capacity, though it be the occasion of error and sin, is that which makes us moral beings. Without it we could not be virtuous. A being that does not make himself, his own character, but is made, and made all he is or can be, has no free will,

no liberty. He is a thing, not a person, and as incapable of merit or demerit as the sun or moon, earthquakes or volcanoes. As much superior as is a moral to a fatal action, a perfection wrought out in and by oneself to a perfection merely received, as much superior as is a person to a thing, albeit a glorious thing, so much do we gain by being made for progress, by having a capacity for virtue, notwithstanding it be also a capacity for sin, so much superior are we to what we should have been, had we been created full grown men, with all our faculties perfected.

But moral evil, by the superintending care of Providence and the free will of man, is often if not always a means of aiding progress itself. The sinner is not so far from God as the merely innocent. He who has failed is farther onward than he who has not been tried. The consequences of error open our eyes to the truth ; the consequences of transgression make us regret our departure from duty and try to return ; the effort to return gives us the power to return. Thus does moral evil ever work its own destruction. Rightly viewed, it were seen to be no entity, no positive existence, but merely the absence of good, the void around and within us, and which by the enlarge-

ment of our being, we are continually filling up. It is not then a person, a thing, a being, and consequently can make nothing against the doctrine, which asserts the essential holiness of all things.

But men formerly supposed evil to be a substantial existence, as much of an entity as goodness. But then came the difficulty, whence could evil originate? It could not come from a good source, for good will not and cannot produce evil. But evil exists. Then all things do not come from the same source. One good and holy God has not made whatever is. There must be more Gods than one. There must be an evil God to create evil, as well as a good God to create good. Hence the notion of two Gods, or two classes of Gods, one good and the other bad, which runs through all antiquity, and under the terms God and the Devil, is reproduced even in the Christian church.

But this notion is easily shown to be unfounded. If one of the two Gods depend on the other, then the other must be its cause, its creator. In this case, nothing would be gained. How could a good God create a bad one, or a bad God create a good one? If one does not depend on the other, then both are independent, each is sufficient for itself. A being that is sufficient for itself, that has the

grounds of its existence within itself, must be absolute, almighty. There are then two absolutes, two almighties; but this is an absurdity, a contradiction in terms. This notion then must be abandoned. It was abandoned, and the evil was transferred to Matter. But Matter is either created or it is not. If it be created, then it is dependent, and that on which it is dependent is answerable for its properties. How could a good God have given it evil properties? If it be not created, then it is sufficient for itself; it has the grounds of its own existence within itself; it is then absolute, almighty, and the absurdity of two absolutes, of two almighties, is reproduced.

Still we need not wonder that men, who saw good and evil thickly strawn together up and down the earth, the tares every where choking the wheat, should have inferred the existence of two opposite and antagonist principles, as the cause of what they saw. Nor is it at all strange that men, who felt themselves restrained, hemmed in, by the material world, who carried about with them a material body for ever importuning them with its wants and subjecting them to a thousand ills, should have looked upon Matter as the cause of all the evil they saw, felt and endured. As things presented them-

selves to their observation they judged rightly. We may, by the aid of a revelation, which shines farther into the darkness and spreads a clearer light around us and over the Universe than any they had received, be able to correct their errors, and to perceive that the antagonism, in which they believed, has no existence in the world of reality; but we must beware how we censure them for the views they took. They saw what they could see with their light and from their position, and we can do no more. Future generations will have more favorable positions and a stronger and clearer light than we have, and they will be to us what we are to the generations which went before us. As we would escape the condemnation of our children, so should we refrain from condemning our fathers. They did their duty, let us do ours,—serve our own generation without defaming that to which we owe our existence and all that we are. All things are holy, and all doctrines are sacred. All the productions of the ever-teeming brain of man, however fantastic or unsubstantial their forms, are but so many manifestations of Humanity, and Humanity is a manifestation of the Divinity. The Son of Man is the Incarnate God. He who blasphemes the spirit with which he works and fulfils his mis-

sion in the flesh, blasphemes the Holy Ghost. Silent then be the tongue that would lisp, palsied the hand that would write the smallest censure upon Humanity for any of the opinions it has expressed, however defective, however far from embracing the whole truth, future or more favored inquirers may find them. Humanity is holy, let the proudest kneel in reverence.

This doctrine of progress, not only accounts for the origin of evil and explains its difficulties, but it points out to us our duty. The duty of every being is to follow its destiny, to seek its end. Man's destiny is illimitable progress; his end is everlasting growth, enlargement of his being. Progress is the end for which he was made. To this end, then, it is his duty to direct all his inquiries, all his systems of religion and philosophy, all his institutions of politics and society, all the productions of genius and taste, in one word all the modes of his activity.

This is his duty. Hitherto he has performed it, but blindly, without knowing and without admitting it. Humanity has but to-day, as it were, risen to self-consciousness, to a perception of its own capacity, to a glimpse of its inconceivably grand and holy destiny. Heretofore it has failed to recognise

clearly its duty. It has advanced, but not designedly, not with foresight; it has done it instinctively, by the aid of the invisible but safe-guiding hand of its Father. Without knowing what it did, it has condemned progress, while it was progressing. It has stoned the prophets and reformers, even while it was itself reforming and uttering glorious prophecies of its future condition. But the time has now come for Humanity to understand itself, to accept the law imposed upon it for its own good, to foresee its end and march with intention steadily towards it. Its future religion is the religion of progress. The true priests are those who can quicken in mankind a desire for progress, and urge them forward in the direction of the True, the Good, the Perfect.

Here I must close. I have uttered the words UNION and PROGRESS as the authentic creed of the New Church, as designating the whole duty of man. Would they had been spoken in a clearer, a louder and a sweeter voice, that a response might be heard from the universal heart of Humanity. But I

have spoken as I could, and from a motive which I shall not blush to own either to myself or to Him to whom all must render an account of all their thoughts, words and deeds. I once had no faith in Him, and I was to myself "a child without a sire." I was alone in the world, my heart found no companionship, and my affections withered and died. But I have found Him, and he is my Father, and mankind are my brothers, and I can love and reverence.

Mankind are my brothers,—they are brothers to one another. I would see them no longer mutually estranged. I labor to bring them together, and to make them feel and own that they are all made of one blood. Let them feel and own this, and they will love one another; they will be kindly affectioned one to another, and "the groans of this nether world will cease;" the spectacle of wrongs and outrages oppress our sight no more; tears be wiped from all eyes, and Humanity pass from death to life, to life immortal, to the life of God, for God is love.

And this result, for which the wise and the good every where yearn and labor, will be obtained. I do not misread the age. I have not looked upon the world only out from the window of my closet; I have mingled in its busy scenes; I have rejoiced and

wept with it ; I have hoped and feared, and believed and doubted with it, and I am but what it has made me. I cannot misread it. It craves union. The heart of man is crying out for the heart of man. One and the same spirit is abroad, uttering the same voice in all languages. From all parts of the world voice answers to voice, and man responds to man. There is a universal language already in use. Men are beginning to understand one another, and their mutual understanding will beget mutual sympathy, and mutual sympathy will bind them together and to God.

And for progress too the whole world is struggling. Old institutions are examined, old opinions criticised, even the old Church is laid bare to its very foundations, and its holy vestments and sacred symbols are exposed to the gaze of the multitude ; new systems are proclaimed, new institutions elaborated, new ideas are sent abroad, new experiments are made, and the whole world seems intent on the means by which it may accomplish its destiny. The individual is struggling to become a greater and a better being. Every where there are men laboring to perfect governments and laws. The poor man is admitted to be human, and millions of voices are demanding that he be treated as a broth-

er. All eyes and hearts are turned to education. The cultivation of the child's moral and spiritual nature becomes the worship of God. The priest rises to the educator, and the school-room is the temple in which he is to minister. There is progress; there will be progress. Humanity must go forward. Encouraging is the future. He, who takes his position on the "high table land" of Humanity, and beholds with a prophet's gaze his brothers, so long separated, coming together, and arm in arm marching onward and upward towards the Perfect, towards God, may hear celestial voices chanting a sweeter strain than that which announced to Judea's shepherds the birth of the Redeemer, and his heart full and overflowing, he may exclaim with old Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

THE END.

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